

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 INR-07 L-03 ACDA-07
NSAE-00 PA-01 SS-15 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-06 TRSE-00
OES-07 IO-13 DLOS-09 NSF-01 NSC-05 /095 W
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R 231633Z AUG 77
FM USMISSION NATO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5460
SECDEF WASHDC
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NATO 08033

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: UR, CA, NATO, PLOS
SUBJECT: SOVIET ICE ISLAND IN THE CANADIAN ARCTIC

1. AT AUGUST 23 POLADS MEETING, CANADIAN REP CIRCULATED THE FOLLOWING PAPER REGARDING SOVIET PRESENCE ON AN ICE ISLAND IN THE CANADIAN ARCTIC AND A CANADIAN REQUEST THAT THE SOVIETS PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING THEIR ACTIVITIES AND PRESENCE ON THE ISLAND.
2.
BEGIN TEXT:

THE SOVIET ICE ISLAND DESIGNATED NP-22, WHICH HAS FOR SOME MONTHS BEEN UNDER OBSERVATION BY CANADIAN FORCES AIRCRAFT, AND WHICH HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF A NUMBER OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES, HAS NOW DRIFTED INTO THE CANADIAN 200-MILE FISHING ZONE IN THE WESTERN ARCTIC (APPROXIMATELY 160 MILES FROM THE NEAREST CANADIAN LAND) AND MAY CONTINUE TO DRIFT CLOSER TO CANADIAN ARCTIC ISLANDS.

THE MINISTER-COUNSELLOR OF THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN
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OTTAWA WAS ASKED TO MEET WITH THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF LEGAL AFFAIRS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND WAS HANDED AN INFORMAL PAPER ASKING THE SOVIET EMBASSY TO ADVISE THE DEPARTMENT OF THE NATURE OF THE ACTIVITIES ON THE ICE ISLAND, AND OF SOVIET INTENTIONS WITH RESPECT TO THEIR CONTINUED PRESENCE ON THE ISLAND.

IN RESPONDING TO THE PAPER, THE MINISTER-COUNSELLOR STRESSED THAT THE ICE ISLAND WAS NOT ENGAGING IN FISHING ACTIVITY OR CONTINENTAL SHELF DRILLING AND THAT CONSEQUENTLY THERE WAS NO BASIS FOR AN ASSERTION OF JURISDICTION BY CANADA. THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL STRESSED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOT ATTEMPTING TO ASSERT JURISDICTION OVER ICE ISLAND BUT SIMPLY NOTING THAT ISLAND WAS WITHIN THE AREA OF APPLICATION OF CANADIAN FISHERIES LAW, AND THAT GIVEN PRESS INTEREST IN THIS MATTER, IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO HAVE CLARIFICATION FROM THE EMBASSY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUEST CONTAINED IN THE PAPER. THE MINISTER-COUNSELLOR SAID THAT SOVIET OFFICIALS WOULD STUDY THE PAPER AND REPLY IN DUE COURSE.

THE FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF THE INFORMAL PIECE OF PAPER:

- "IN MARCH 1976, THE USSR ICE STATION NP-22
 - DRIFTED INTO THE CANADIAN ARCTIC AREA AND
 - SINCE THEN ITS PROGRESS HAS BEEN MONITORED
 - BY CANADA. AS IS KNOWN, A CBC TELEVISION
 - CREW VISITED THE ISLAND IN MARCH 1977.
 - A QUESTION WAS RAISED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS
 - ON APRIL 4, 1977, AS A RESULT OF THE CBC
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- PROGRAMME, AND AT THAT TIME THE SECRETARY
- OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS RESPONDED THAT
- THE ICE ISLAND DID NOT CONSTITUTE A THREAT
- TO CANADIAN INTERESTS IN THE ARCTIC.
- "THE CANADIAN AUTHORITIES HAVE NOTED THAT
- NP-22 HAS CONTINUED TO DRIFT IN A SOUTHEASTERLY
- DIRECTION AND IS NOW ROUGHLY 160 NAUTICAL MILES
- NORTH OF PRINCE PATRICK ISLAND (79O 18' NORTH,
- 127O 48' WEST).
- "THUS THE POSITION OF NP-22 IS NOW WELL WITHIN
- THE 200-MILE ZONE WITHIN WHICH CANADA EXERCISES
- JURISDICTION AND WITHIN WHICH SPECIFIC CANADIAN
- LEGISLATION APPLIES. THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA
- WISHES THE USSR TO TAKE NOTE OF THIS FACT.
- IN GENERAL TERMS, CANADIAN LAWS APPLY WITH
- RESPECT TO FISHERIES AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION.
- "WITH REGARD TO RESEARCH CONCERNING THE CONTINENTAL
- SHELF, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD WISH THE USSR TO
- TAKE NOTE OF THE FACT THAT UNDER THE 1958
- CONVENTION ON THE CONTINENTAL SHELF (TO WHICH

- CANADA AND THE USSR ARE PARTIES), THE CONSENT
 - OF THE COASTAL STATE SHALL BE OBTAINED IN
 - RESPECT OF ANY RESEARCH CONCERNING THE CONTINENTAL
 - SHELF AND UNDERTAKEN THERE.
-
- "THE DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS REQUESTS
 - THE EMBASSY OF THE USSR TO ADVISE IT OF THE
 - NATURE OF SOVIET ACTIVITIES ON THE ISLAND AND
 - OF USSR INTENTIONS WITH RESPECT TO CONTINUED
 - SOVIET PRESENCE ON THE ISLAND.

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INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 NATO 08033

- "IF ASKED BY THE PRESS, IT IS THE DEPARTMENT'S
- INTENTION TO STATE THAT THESE POINTS AND REQUESTS
- HAVE BEEN CONVEYED TO THE EMBASSY OF THE USSR."

END TEXT. BENNETT

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